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# ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

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# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

EDITOR: D. HARRISON

Central Library, Manchester, 2.

VOL. 51. NO. 11

NOVEMBER, 1958

## Voting Time

November, noted for bonfires, fog, and the dismal prospect of approaching winter, is of interest to librarians primarily as the season of elections. At this time of year the L.A. and its sections, at local and national level, broadcast a seemingly endless mass of voting papers, inscribed with the names of members of the profession, great and small; and in the right-hand column opposite each name, there is a square, pathetically waiting for its cross.

How many of these symbols of our democratic association find their way back to Chaucer or other appropriate counting-house? Voting figures culled from election results of previous years indicate that the proportion is not as high as it might be. And why not? Are we as a profession uninterested in who runs our affairs; who arranges our meetings, changes our examination syllabus, spends our money? For these are some of the things our elected representatives do: and not only the men of Chaucer House, but the representatives of the smallest group or division which forms part of our Association's unwieldy structure can have a direct influence on professional policies. It is therefore important that members of the Association take seriously their right to vote.

Nor should any individual feel himself (or herself) unable to make a decision on the merits of the candidates involved; modesty of this kind is the cause of much of the apparent apathy over elections. But if voting in elections were restricted to those capable of forming an absolutely unbiased and accurately informed opinion of each candidate, then elections would soon be extinct. Members must use what knowledge they possess to the full in casting their votes; no-one can do more and no-one however well-informed is infallible.

As guides to unknown candidates, consider their professional reputations, their work for professional associations and for professional education, their contributions to professional journals. Ask also the opinion of those who are in a position to know more of the candidates than yourself, provided of course you respect their judgment! Even if you know little of the candidate himself, you may know something of those who have proposed and seconded him; and these proposers and seconders are more than likely to have at least a similarity of professional outlook to the candidate, though they will not of course hold identical opinions on all points. The voting forms for the important national elections of the L.A. and its sections give this information as to proposers, and also brief professional details of the candidates.

The future of a democratic organisation lies in the hands of its members. Each one of us is capable of making a cross, and of mastering

the intricacies of the various secrecy-ensuring envelopes. To vote costs at most a postage stamp; in many libraries not even this, since local representatives make arrangements to collect and return voting papers in bulk. It takes little of our time to make and record these decisions, decisions in themselves of limited importance, but which when added to the many others like them form a cornerstone of our Association.

### *Lifting the Lid*

Most of us at some time have suffered from a feeling of frustration as some of the ablest of our colleagues forsake public librarianship. We have felt disconsolate, too, over inadequate salaries and at the lack of interest shown in libraries by many local authorities; we have been annoyed by "fixed" appointments, farcical interviews, "closed" library systems, niggardly committees, and the many minor discourtesies of interviewing authorities. We have also had the dubious satisfaction of getting these feelings off our chest by grumbling to colleagues, wives (or husbands) and parents. None of us, however, had spoken on these matters to such an important gathering as the L.A. Conference until this year, when Peter Pocklington used the A.A.L. session of the Brighton Conference for this purpose. It was, he said, "the lid of a dustbin rather than a treasure-chest," which he was lifting, and the hitherto uninformed among his hearers must have got more than an eyeful of dust; though he was careful to refer to the many authorities where these things did not happen and to round off his paper by constructive proposals. "Lifting the Lid" will appear in full in Conference Papers; suffice it here to thank Mr. Pocklington for his endeavours on behalf of assistant librarians everywhere, and to hope that he has convinced at least a few of those in authority that the causes of our discontent are problems for serious consideration and not mere coffee-time grouses.

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# The Uses of Blacklisting

## Alternatives

The replies to my letter on blacklisting serve, in their different ways, to emphasise the main points demonstrated by the result of L.A. action in the Gateshead case.

Clearly a decision is needed between the following alternatives:

*Either:* 1. Blacklisting must be done consistently and efficiently with every possible effort made to ensure effectiveness.

*Or:* 2. The Association must accept the fact that it is in no position to intervene directly in salary matters, and allow all members the same right to accept or reject posts according to individual circumstances.

The hindrances to the first alternative are well known, but deserving of new consideration. They are:—

- (a) No sanctions may be applied to blacklisting by the Library Association.
- (b) If ever the Association is seriously challenged over blacklisting action, then our standing as a Chartered Institute may well be threatened. The Charter implies no right to dictate salaries.
- (c) It is doubtful whether the Association is in a position to arrive at a fair decision with regard to a post, to take action in time, and to keep interested members fully informed.

If it is decided that, in spite of all this, the Association has a moral right to organise members with a view to boycotting certain posts, then we are faced with a situation in which we have at our disposal no means of enforcement, except what may be described as "social sanctions."

If we are not prepared to apply even this slight deterrent, then we are in the position of asking members to forfeit individual opportunities whilst at the same time refusing them even the last flimsy safeguard to their personal interests.

Blacklisting is useless if not effective. If it cannot be made effective, then in fairness to the majority it ought to be dropped altogether.

H. WHITE, *Cannock Public Library.*

## *I told you so*

Several times in the past in A.A.L. Committees and even within the Council itself I have drawn attention, in my shy and retiring way, to the dangers of the pronounced inconsistency evident in the pattern of L.A. protests against posts at inadequate salaries. On each occasion I have had the feeling that nobody was particularly interested, and in any case it is most rude to criticize the L.A. (Yes, the A.A.L. has become so respectable of late). The results of ignoring the warnings given by myself and the one or two other enlightened members of the profession are to be seen in the September issue of the *Assistant*.

I am most grateful to Mr. Cardy for providing me with the opportunity to say to the A.A.L. Council a collective "I told you so." Although I have been a wholehearted supporter of the policy of protesting against

posts advertised at inadequate salaries, I have to admit that, on the facts as they are presented to us, leaving aside the moral issues involved, Mr. Cardy had some justification for proceeding as he did.

Let it here be said that I have the greatest regard for the way in which such protests as have been made have been handled by the Chaucer House executive; a very fine job has been done on our behalf in the past few years. But nothing is so good that it cannot be improved upon. It is from this constructive standpoint rather than any other that I wish to make certain observations upon the dangers of inconsistent application of the machinery of protest.

It is difficult to go back into immediate history on this subject if only because the frequent telescoping of grades in the past few years tends to confuse issues. It would be as well to bear in mind this telescoping when reading the illustrations given.

In 1956 the National Press rang with the story of the oversmall dimensions of the desk of the Deputy Librarian at Middlesbrough. A short while previously the same National Press had carried a story about the dispute which had arisen between the L.A. and Middlesbrough Corporation. The L.A. had informed the Corporation that they considered A.P.T. Grade IV inappropriate for a post of such responsibility, and considered that A.P.T. Grade VI should apply. As the profession at large watched the outcome of this protest, an advertisement from Ealing requesting applications for the post of Deputy Borough Librarian on A.P.T. Grades IV-V apparently passed unnoticed. Ealing is almost 35,000 of population larger than Middlesbrough, and almost certainly has a very much higher cost of living quite apart from the fact that the library service is, statistically larger in all respects except book-fund.

At Port Talbot, Grade A.P.T. II was considered to be inappropriate for the post of Borough Librarian, Grade A.P.T. VII being considered nearer the mark. At Crewe a post of Borough Librarian on Grade A.P.T. IV at almost the same time aroused no official reaction despite the fact that Crewe was 5,000 of population larger than Port Talbot and, miserable though both were, better financed for Library purposes.

Similar comparisons could be continued almost ad nauseam; they are liberally sprinkled throughout the pages of T.L.S. over the past five years or so.

Every case points to the fact that we have been inconsistent in the application of what little we have in the way of sanctions. Might I not be excused for thinking that protests are only levelled when someone at Chaucer House has time to organize one rather than as a matter of routine? What is the policy adopted in making a decision to protest about the grading of a given post? If there is not one it is time there was. If there is it might be rigidly applied to avoid any future repetition of such a convincingly face-saving letter as Mr. Cardy's.

D. E. DAVINSON, *Dukinfield Public Library.*

### ***The Other Way***

It is natural for the L.A. and A.A.L. to endeavour to ensure that posts in libraries should be adequately graded by a form of blacklisting, but that is no reason for members refusing to realise that it is impossible for the Association to take action against personal or corporate members to ensure adequate grading, and that therefore the nearer to success the

present policy gets, the more likely it is that an indifferent applicant will be appointed to the position advertised; for the best applicants, perhaps against their own judgment, will withdraw.

In these cases it is very likely that the library service, and the position of the Chief Librarian and library staff will be poorly regarded for at least as long as the Chief holds his job, for his colleagues will have little respect for him and he is hardly likely to be the man of ability and character required to lift the service from the low position it evidently occupied at the time of his appointment.

History shows us time and again that a good library service with adequate staff and remuneration has followed from the appointment of a first class man to an inadequately graded post (before, of course, the days of blacklisting). Good library services in this country and reasonably paid staffs have been created, not by library committees, the Library Association, or the A.A.L., or by the public, but by individual librarians who accepted appointments often at inadequate salaries and devoted themselves to building the service, creating the staff and fighting for reasonable salaries.

Some 25 years ago the present librarian of Croydon, speaking in the debate at the A.A.L. Meeting of the Harrogate Conference (devoted, as usual, in the days of Marr and Firth to conditions of service and salaries), said he thought the responsibility for getting an adequate job and salary rested with the individual in the first place, and secondly on the shoulders of the individual Chief Librarians inside their own library systems on behalf of their staffs. Maybe T. E. Callander was wrong, but I, for one, have never forgotten his words through more than 20 years of argument with finance and establishment committees, and although many of my generation may not have heard his words, they have followed his precept.

L. WHITE, *Chief Librarian, Wallasey Public Library.*

### ***The President replies***

Those of us who work in public life and have to administer decisions made by governing bodies which protect the general community against the selfishness of the few, are accustomed to ill-tempered criticism, to being called "dictators," "Big Brother," "1984," and the rest. So we can read with tolerance such a letter as that of Mr. Cardy. Under the circumstances his annoyance is understandable.

His principal points seem to be that the Library Association (a) has no right to advise its members that they should not apply for certain undervalued posts (b) should be more "consistent" in its actions and (c) should not advise against "A" because it does not advise against "B." I will return to these points later. But first I would challenge his insinuation that the whole business is in any way underhand or not known to the membership. Anyone who has followed *Liaison* during the past eighteen months will have seen the large amount of publicity given to the activities of the Membership Committee in these matters.

It is of course quite reasonable for anyone to have his own evaluation of a particular job, but one assumes that this appraisalment will be done with some regard to the facts and circumstances of different libraries. In a fairly small profession like ours it is fairly easy for anyone in a relatively senior position and with a little experience to find

out what goes on. It is easy to discover that in the population group, 100—150,000, Gateshead is the only place which grades its Librarian in IV; a few have Grade V; and the majority are in the "lettered" grades, mostly C and not a few as high as F: also that there are a large number of places with much smaller populations paying Grade IV and upwards for fewer than three branches and 36 staff. Even if one's own information is scarce, then that in the possession of the Library Association is at one's disposal and is used in all its considerations of the "rate for the job."

Mr. Cardy makes great play of the argument that it is no function of the Library Association to act as a trade union. I do not think that it is acting as a trade union in its present actions. Were it to act as a trade union it would take far stronger action than it does—and would have the support of a large part of the membership if it did! It acts as a professional *advisory* body to its own membership and to those outside—including the trade unions—who consult it and act in close liaison with it in all matters appertaining to salaries and conditions of service for librarians. This is quite common practice for a professional society, many of whom sit, as does the L.A., in the Nalco Consultative Committees. In spite of his arguments on this point, never once does Mr. Cardy mention the Society of Municipal and County Chief Librarians, *which is a trade union* and also issues advice to intending applicants for under-graded posts—in the case of Gateshead, for example, it advised candidates only to accept the post if it were re-graded to Scale "B." Nor did he reply to the Library Association's request that persons should let them know if they intended to apply for the post—a small point, may be, but as a result the Library Association was not aware that an appointment was made until it was all over, for the other interviewed candidates had not written to the L.A. in the first place. How then could the L.A. keep applicants aware of the progress of its negotiations.

My own views on the need for professional solidarity in its attitude to "blacklisting" were stated in my Presidential Address, and I would not withdraw a word. Fortunately they also seem to be the views of the vast majority of our members and the A.A.L. Council is certainly unanimous in its desire to support the L.A. in all its efforts in the matter, for it was they who urged that action should be taken in the first place. It is the job of a professional body to express its opinion on the value of its qualifications and to advise its members against jobs which do not measure up to that standard. It is done by most professional bodies both in and out of local government, and whether or not there are nationally agreed scales—though of course action is easier, and more likely to be effective, in the former case. It is also right that the association should try to negotiate for better salaries through every possible agency and reasonable to expect its membership to help rather than hinder during the course of these negotiations.

The Library Association has a direct duty under its Royal Charter to "promote the better administration of libraries" and "to promote whatever may tend to the improvement of the position and the qualifications of librarians." Both these objects imply activity in the salary and conditions fields and responsibility both to institutional members, to advise them on the salaries necessary to attract the persons best qualified and experienced to administer their libraries efficiently, and to personal members to ensure them an adequate and appropriate income. Most authorities recognise the right of the L.A. to act in this manner, many

even seek advice and many react favourably to representations. Most authorities pay "average" salaries, some are better than average, some are worse than average and some are "bad." It is in these cases that the Association advises and negotiates, and at the same time requests its members to refrain from applying until negotiations are satisfactorily concluded. It is difficult to make representations about "sitting tenants" unless that person seeks help, yet there are many cases where the Association has been able to help in the regrading of an occupied post, when requested by the occupant.

The Council has agreed to "blacklist" in cases where an actual or likely breach of an agreed award is evident (e.g. the old "A.P.T.II award"), or where posts are considerably and demonstrably below those paid in similar services. It is obvious that speed is necessary, and so action is taken by the Membership Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Membership Committee, within the letter and the spirit of the Council resolution. This seems fair enough, in view of the amount of information already at the disposal of the Association to enable a decision to be made. That this is accepted by the majority of the members is evident from the successful outcome of many negotiations, which are initiated at the same time as members are advised to refrain from applying, and from the frequently 100 per cent. support received. As population is only one of many factors considered when action is taken, some apparent inconsistencies may occur, but I do not think that these should affect the attitude of the membership to those which are blacklisted. Maybe Glasgow *should* have been "blacklisted," but the fact that it was does not affect the rightness of the L.A.s attitude to any other special case. (Glasgow still pays higher than anywhere else in Scotland).

The moral issues involved are lightly dismissed by Mr. Davinson, and overlooked by Mr. Cardy. I maintain that in a professional organization they cannot so easily be forgotten. When one joins such a body, one assumes some common bonds of interest and mutual obligation with those of like mind. Surely one of these obligations is to co-operate loyally with one's colleagues to further the objects of the organization. It is a basic principle that one does not try to profit at their expense, no matter what stretchings of conscience can be made to excuse one's conduct. The growing success of the Library Association's policy is due to the fact that the membership is solidly behind it. The A.A.L. Council will always be vigilant to see that the policy is applied as firmly and as fairly as possible, and will not be slow to suggest changes that may be deemed necessary. At the same time it will give its wholehearted support to its parent body to continue to press for better salary conditions by whatever means are in its power. In like manner it trusts that it will have the loyalty of its members in refraining from embarrassing any negotiations by precipitate and selfish action. The battle is slowly being won—now is not the time to withdraw.

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## ***Breaking the Deadlock***

From time to time I ask the Chairman of my NALGO Branch Executive Committee, who is also on the National Executive Council, how negotiations are going on the old A.P.T. II award. Last time, he told me that it wasn't NALGO which was dragging its feet, but the L.A. The L.A. was inflexible, the employers adamant, the result stalemate.

It is understandable that the L.A. should not want to agree to an increase in the number of staff supervised but surely all librarians agree that number of staff supervised is no way to assess library gradings? It is, for example, inappropriate for reference librarians; while a cataloguing department might contain six typists or an Adrema machine doing the same work.

Ought not the L.A. to try to break the deadlock by putting forward an alternative grading system for NALGO and the employers to discuss? It might not be accepted, but it could prove the basis for a solution.

Population served could be the yardstick. It should not be difficult to assess the population served by a particular branch library, for instance. Similarly the grades for Chief Assistant, Cataloguer, etc., could be based on the population of the local authority area, in the same way that Chief Librarians are trying to arrange gradings for themselves. Exactly what grades would be appropriate to what population would be subject to negotiation of course, but a consensus of opinion could be found on what should be paid—this must be so, otherwise there would never be any black-listing.

I have heard it said that some senior members of the profession are not much bothered by the failure of negotiations so far. Doubtless their local authorities fill old A.P.T. II posts by internal promotion. Those Chiefs who must advertise either have to wait a long time for a suitable candidate or they have to lower their standards (unless they are very lucky, or unless their authority is enlightened enough to regrade the post). In either case the service suffers.

As a profession we have found it difficult to agree on the minimum population which can support an efficient library service. If the A.A.L. Council could agree on, e.g., the maximum population served by a branch library, above which the branch librarian should be graded on A.P.T. II, and make recommendations to the L.A. Council, we might be well on the way to a proper grading system for library staffs.

P. D. GANN, *Gloucestershire County Library.*

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that it is in use in all the eleven University Institutions of the Union of South Africa: five catering for English-speaking and four for Afrikaans students, while one is bi-lingual and one exclusively for non-white students. One and all they turn to KEESING'S for authentic data on Current Affairs the world over.

## ***Desparanto, or A Lesson for Linguaphoneys***

May a humble enquirer ask why it is that the outlets for the proper exercise of our professional energies are so choked that our members must have recourse to sinister sublimations in order to find release? This gloomy reflection was prompted by a letter from Mr. Sexton in a recent issue anent the propagation of an artificial language. He betrayed a shameful but obviously grand passion for the thing, which shocked me (and he working just round the corner from the most respectable collection of properly constituted *unsynthetic* languages in the country, in the International Library at Liverpool), a shock intensified in a following issue when Mr. Wilson broke into an exultant chorus on behalf of another such product. It is the symptom that intrigues me, not the subject. Why do librarians so readily spark into life, like Lawrence's "little flamey spouts," only when dealing with topics not germane to librarianship? Phonemes and glottal stops notwithstanding, it is time such aberrations and quaint deviations from our real purposes and practices were scotched at the start, before the *Assistant* becomes a philological mortuary, or a periodical devoted to our extravagant extramural interests, fascinating no doubt, but irrelevant.

It is ludicrous that the further we get from our profession, the livelier our interest becomes, just as if we had nothing material to our job to discuss, but only marginal enthusiasms to proclaim. Truly the situation is dangerous when, apart from the anguished cries of the regular examination corps, and their indignant demands for enquiry into the immoralities of Examiners, nothing else moves the membership—except this kind of embroidered frivolity. Are we so null and void? Are we to be judged by these symptoms, which would make any observer suspect we were an *extant* profession, but not a *living* one? We don't need to look the other way or indulge in any kind of escapism. We have a function to perform

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for our patrons; more important, we have a long operation to perform on ourselves. The written word is the whole of our life; we must continually renew our interest and response to it, and train ourselves in the discipline of our own language. Any other enthusiasm may be valid enough, but it has nothing at all to do with us as a body of professional men and women with declared beliefs.

That is all I want to urge. And if topics relevant to our purpose are lacking, I suggest the following for attention: the training of judgment; the decay of literary discipline; the meaning of reading; the taste of our readers—what do we know about it and does it matter?; can we prove to our clientele that "reading maketh a full man" or is this delusion?

So let's by-pass our dilettantes and get back to the main road—literacy. First we must become sentient, literate librarians, then we can educate our masters. We need no odour of piety, just practice. Until we are really fit we can leave metalinguistics and other exotica in the attic.

D. E. GERARD, *Deputy City Librarian, Nottingham.*

### ***So you want to emigrate***

I read with great interest your report on the shortage of librarians in Canada in September's *Assistant*. To the younger members in particular, this looks a very tempting tit-bit to be offered, and a number of tongues will be working overtime convincing wives that a great new future could open out before you. I know; I tried convincing my wife. Then I wrote to the Canadian Library Association asking about positions open to British qualified librarians. I received a recently published report which convinced me that Great Britain was the place to live.

The report I received is *Education for librarianship: report on British library education*, by B. A. Ower, and published by the Canadian Library Association in January of this year. This report clearly states what they think of our methods of education and the value of our professional qualifications.

The report commences by discussing the L.A. examinations thoroughly and critically, the main criticisms being of the monopoly on examinations and training held by the L.A.; and of the use of its powers for setting up standards of training for the profession. The second part deals with the educational facilities available to students, and a criticism of the low minimum standard of education necessary for entry into the profession, which they consider an adverse affect on the recruitment of graduates.

The problems the C.L.A. wishes to solve are as follows:—

1. To encourage British librarians who are university graduates and are chartered librarians to accept Canadian positions. In the case of those with partial completion of training, provision should be made to encourage them to complete training by acquisition of the B.L.S. (Batchelor of Library Science) degree.
2. To prevent non-graduates who are chartered librarians being employed in professional library positions until qualified by Canadian standards while at the same time giving recognition to the F.L.A. as representing comprehensive education in librarianship according to British standards.



The following are the recommendations put with a view to solving the problems:—

1. That the F.L.A. plus a degree be considered equivalent to the B.L.S. degree.
2. That the A.L.A. possessed by a graduate be recognised as an intermediate and not a full qualification.
3. That the F.L.A. alone, while recognising it as an indication of a high degree of professional training and experience, is not considered equivalent to Canadian B.L.S. and should be equated as such in any certification scheme.
4. That non-graduates possessing only an A.L.A. cannot be considered as qualified for the profession according to Canadian standards and that they record their opposition to the recruitment and appointment of these persons to professional positions in Canadian libraries.

The following table shows clearly how British qualifications stand at the side of Canadian qualifications.

CANADIAN.	BRITISH.
Master's degree from Canadian Library School.	No equivalent.
B.L.S. from Canadian Library School (or American M.L.S.).	University degree and F.L.A.
University degree and non-degree full-course in library science.	University degree and A.L.A.
B.A. or B.S. in Library School, or undergraduate course with credit towards first baccalaureate degree of at least two sessions.	F.L.A.
Non-degree course of at least one session duration at recognised institution awarding certificate.	A.L.A.

Well—have you got the qualifications necessary? I'm afraid I have not, and it looks as if Great Britain (God bless her) is to remain my home.

The above-mentioned report is available from the Canadian Library Association, Ottawa 4, Canada—price 35 cents.

JOHN WHITEHEAD, *Ilkeston Public Library.*

### ***General Oversight in Private View***

Private View listed Ian Wilkes' suggested questions to ask oneself on entering furtively the libraries of one's colleagues

... (10) The book stock—what is there? What isn't there? Why?

What condition is it in?

Ask these questions, too; they are important, Mr. Wilkes.

H. P. STARK, *Willesden Public Libraries.*

## ***In-breeding***

In his address to the A.A.L. session at the L.A. Conference at Brighton, Mr. Pocklington expressed serious concern at the loss of able public librarians, some overseas, and others to non-public libraries in this country; he quoted figures to indicate how great is the movement away from public libraries, and how small is the trickle in the opposite direction.

I am glad that this situation has been verified and proven by Mr. Pocklington, for when I tried to make the same point at an A.A.L. meeting some years ago, I was openly disbelieved on the grounds that non-public libraries require, and set out in their advertisements, qualifications of such a nature that public librarians are effectively debarred from applying for such vacancies.

In fact, as Mr. Pocklington has shown, the non-public libraries are very hospitable to public library applicants; their attitude is that given good experience and a suitable qualification, any candidate can adapt himself, or be trained for, work in a non-public library. Some public librarians who have made the change have become chief librarians at a much lower age than would have been likely in a public library.

On the other hand, recruitment to public libraries, except at the very lowest level, is governed by the requirement of previous experience in public libraries, which means that such libraries are compelled to staff themselves by a process of in-breeding, and new blood is prevented from entering the profession. Since the war there have been colleagues of mine who would have been happy to enter the public library service, and who would, I am sure, have made a success therein, but they were prevented from even applying for suitable vacancies by the invariable requirement of previous public library experience.

If public libraries were to make entry into their service as free and open as do non-public libraries, they would open up a whole new field of recruitment, and we might see the beginning of a stream in the opposite direction to that emphasised by Mr. Pocklington. I am not now dealing with the question of graduates, nor with the post of Chief Librarian, for which special qualifications will always be required. But every special librarian who entered the public library service would bring with him a variety of interest and breadth of experience which could not fail to be beneficial to that service.

As Mr. Pocklington's address was at the official A.A.L. session of the conference, would it not be appropriate for the A.A.L. to accept the responsibility of taking the first steps in a campaign to free recruitment to public library staffs of the restriction about which I have written.

R. J. Hox, *School of Oriental and African Studies.*

## ***Library Education Today***

Of the replies to my article, *Library Education To-day*, that from Mr. E. F. Ferry, is of particular significance, coming as it does from the Vice-President of the A.A.L. It is disappointing therefore, that it fails to refute my main arguments.

Mr. Ferry would assure me that the A.A.L. Council realises "that full-time training is the *ultimate* goal in librarianship." Such an assurance would be more convincing if accompanied by concrete evidence in

terms of A.A.L. Council decisions and actions during the twelve years in which the schools have developed.

I cited the acceptance in *other countries* of full-time professional education as "the only appropriate method," mentioning specifically the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. "Few of the countries cited," says Mr. Ferry, "can boast a really nationwide and active library service." Assuming that this statement is relevant, surely we would expect these "underdeveloped" countries to have far more primitive systems of professional education than our own. In general, precisely the reverse is true! Try explaining our strange mixture of methods to an American, Norwegian or Danish librarian, and note the look of horror!

"For some time to come, it will not be possible for all who wish to attend full-time Schools of Librarianship to do so." Thus Mr. Ferry. Now this was said in 1946 and has been heard so often that it might almost be the Sixth Law of Library Science. Full-time education as the sole method could in fact be introduced quite simply by a decision of the L.A. that from a certain date, say four years hence, attendance at a full-time school would become a requirement for sitting the Registration Examination (or its successor). This would give students and education authorities ample time to prepare for the new system, and it would no longer be possible for education authorities to rely on the existence of part-time facilities as a reason for refusing to make grants to students for full-time courses. There would, of course, be hard cases and to meet the needs of those *fitted for the profession of librarianship* and unable to obtain grants, the L.A. should expand considerably the Mitchell Memorial Fund to provide larger interest-free loans. But is the problem of the hard case to be allowed to delay an essential development?

PHILIP M. WHITEMAN, *Lecturer, Leeds School of Librarianship.*

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# YESTERDAY'S CHAMPAGNE

## *Council Notes—18 September*

It may be the weather, it may be the atom-bombs, or it may simply be due to the fact that we always seem to need a few days to recover after taking our annual leave; whatever the cause, the usual sparkle seemed absent from Council after a four-month recess. There were some of the feelings of the morning-after, and in this respect the agenda did not help. Some of the issues carried over from May now had no more appeal than flat champagne, whilst most of the important business of the meeting was concerned with decisions too clear-cut to encourage any clash of wits.

One effect of the lapse of time since the previous meeting was evident from the start when the President congratulated those who had taken up new appointments and those who had outwitted the examiners. This involved an unusually large number of Council members and gave fresh hope to all those others who felt convinced that they could do just as well. A further word from the President was one of welcome to Colin Muris, an old friend of Council, who was attending as Chairman of the newly-formed West of Scotland Division.

Arising from the minutes were four motions which had been forwarded in May to the L.A. Council and which had since received consideration. The first, which concerned the provision of trained children's librarians in every library system, did not inspire any action, mainly because of the present shortage of recruits in this work. The second, calling for an independent and fully-costed study of book-charging systems had a more encouraging reception and we can hope for positive action as a result. The next suggested that foreign Study Tours should be timed to avoid a clash with examination periods in future, and this recommendation is to be borne in mind. The last motion, proposing an approach to the B.B.C. and Independent Television with the offer of a panel of librarians for book review programmes, is to be pursued. The need for a more active public relations policy in the Library Association is one to which the A.A.L. has long been drawing attention, and exploitation of the possibilities of television is one aspect of public relations which requires a far more positive approach. Miss Willson proposed that the L.A. should be asked to draw the attention of the Branches to the desirability of an approach to the various Independent Television Companies at local level, and Mr. Phillips, in seconding, expressed his opinion of those librarians who boast that they have never seen a television programme. Mr. Thompson displayed an expert knowledge of the inner organisation of ITV, and went on to assure us that we knew what we wanted. Needless to say, Council fully endorsed this proposal.

The Bristol and District Division received well-earned congratulations upon their excellent Union List of Professional Textbooks, and then we turned yet again to posts at inadequate salaries. The results of negotiations which had been concluded since the previous meeting were all satisfactory ones of upgrading. One case still outstanding, however, produced the disconcerting news that for lack of a librarian one library authority was making some sort of attempt to run its service by appointing the Clerk as Acting Chief Librarian. How long, we wonder, before the Sewage Inspectors take over?

Bad news of a different sort came with the report that Don Davinson, one of our "under-thirty" National Councillors, had tendered his resignation. The cause was one for congratulations—his appointment as Chief Librarian of Dukinfield—but his respect for the tradition that Chiefs shall not serve on Council or Committees meant an abrupt end to a period of service that had proved abundantly his great ability and charm.

The reports of the Committees produced, as usual, a wealth of information. That of the Press and Publication Committee included a report of sales that had a flavour of the Stock Exchange, with Clough brisk, especially in overseas markets. There was good news, too, concerning the fast growing collection

of film-slides. A motion which was still outstanding from the Week-end Conference at Liverpool at last received agreement. This expressed concern over imperfect copies of books, and it is hoped that an approach will be made to the Publishers' Association.

From the Education and Library Committee we learnt that Mr. Ferry will not be able to continue to edit the examination supplements for the *Assistant Librarian*, and the regret with which this news was received was accompanied by gratitude for his having carried out this task so well. A lighter moment came when Mr. Davey read two typical letters from correspondence course students. The first was from a would-be librarian who is at present a pawn-broker, and the second came from a lady who was anxious to undertake a revision course whether or not she had already passed the examination.

From the Policy Committee came news of the latest developments in the reorganisation of the Chaucer House Executive. As members will know, Mr. Welsford and Mr. Henrik Jones are both due to retire next year, and it was possible to report that the A.A.L. views concerning the appointment of their successors will largely be endorsed. Consideration had also been given to the recent correspondence in the *Assistant Librarian* on blacklisting, to which the President was asked to reply.

The Conference Committee was able to report a large amount of spadework in preparing for a lively week-end next year. This will be at Folkestone, from 17th—19th April, at a W.T.A. Hostel. The accommodation and food were reported to be excellent, though a certain amount of room-sharing would be necessary. However, to quote Mr. Oxley, "this will be managed as discreetly as possible." The theme will be "Librarianship for a new age; purpose, pattern and practice."

Much of the Finance and General Purposes Committee's time was taken up in consideration of the problem of distributing the *Assistant Librarian* promptly to newly-enrolled members. Miss Ensing presented a memorandum which outlined the limitations imposed upon the A.A.L. by L.A. procedure, and which put forward proposals designed to ensure that the inevitable time-lag should be no longer than is absolutely necessary within those limitations.

The most controversial item in the report of the Committee concerned a recommendation from the Education and Library Committee regarding a proposed Residential Revision School which G.L.D. were planning to run in April, 1959, at the request of Council. The Educationists suggested that there should be a subsidy of £2 for each student, but this was strongly opposed by the Financiers on two grounds. Firstly, that such a subsidy would be devoted mainly to board and lodging and not to the administration of the school, and secondly that such a subsidy set no limit to Council's financial liability; the more successful the school, the bigger the loss. Mr. A. C. Jones, in addition, cast doubts upon the wisdom of the plans which had been made, and seconded a motion from Miss Willson that the school should not be held. The G.L.D. contingent supported this since they felt that such a School could not be a success without this subsidy, and the motion was carried.

The next item on the agenda was a motion from the Bristol and District Division concerning the notorious memorandum of the Finchley Labour Party on library charges. This was received, and then we turned to the appointment or nomination of officers for the coming year. Mr. Ferry's succession was proposed from the Chair and confirmed with acclamation. Two names were proposed for the Vice-Presidency, those of Mr. Phillips and Mr. A. C. Jones. Council was faced with a difficult choice, and the Hon. Secretary was already tearing up pieces of paper for a ballot when Mr. Phillips announced that he did not wish to stand. His supporters were unable to shake his resolution, and so members congratulated Mr. Jones upon his well-deserved appointment. The other Honorary Officers were willing to prolong their sentences, and a number of routine or formal items of business brought a sober, rather prosaic meeting to its close.

JOHN H. JONES.

## Review

### "Information Service in Libraries" by D. J. Foskett

Crosby Lockwood. 1958 13s. 6d.

One of the difficulties in reviewing this book is the fact that it is not clear for whom the work is written. It is published by Crosby Lockwood as No. 4 in their "New Librarianship Series," and on the dust cover appear these words "Students in librarianship and all others concerned with providing specialised information to experts will find this an invaluable book." The author states in his preface that he has deliberately set out to give a personal view of the subject. This has resulted in the book having a strong bias towards the work done by information services in industry, and as the majority of services described are common practice in industrial libraries, one can only assume that this book is written primarily for students and review it on that basis. This being so, is it really necessary for the librarian—information officer dispute to be served up again? At the moment there is every sign that common sense will, at last, prevail; particularly as the more vociferous supporters of one of the sides have turned their energies to the formation of a new mutual admiration society. The author himself refers to the "futility of the years of discussion, often acrimonious." It is a pity that he has chosen to go over the subject again in this book.

Students will, however, get much of value from the other chapters. The author has a practical approach to the problems involved and rightly stresses the importance of the total integration of the industrial information service into the company which it is serving and to which it belongs. Emphasis is placed on the dissemination of information which is "the characteristic activity of the special library, distinguishing it, more than any other feature, from university and public libraries," and also on the importance of presenting information in a form that is useful to the reader. Reference is made to the editing of papers written by research workers. Many librarians have to do this as a part of their work, but one cannot help feeling that the resentment which this engenders in some quarters, not only makes for difficulty in the librarian's personal relations with research workers, but also undermines their acceptance of the service as a whole.

One of the best chapters in the book is devoted to arrangement and indexing. This was, perhaps, only to be expected as the author is well known for his work in this field. His descriptions of faceted classification and chain indexing are easily understandable and should prove most useful to students of classification, and he emphasises the need to "appreciate that classification is a means to assist reference service, and not some sacred cow to be kept alive by periodical *ex cathedra* revisions . . ." Farradane's system of isolates and analets is described in two sentences and Taube's Co-ordinate Indexing in one paragraph. Both of these methods could well have been more fully explained. The author hopes that the future will bring a new general scheme of classification which will be an integration, and not an aggregation, of a number of special schemes, some of which have been already developed for use in particular subject fields. He states, and many will agree with him, that a good classification system and indexes will satisfy most enquiries more quickly than a machine.

The chapter on "The Educational Role of an Information Service" deals with the support which the library can give to the overall educational policy of the company. Many courses are run these days, by Institutes, Societies, and also inside individual companies, on work study, personnel management, organisation and methods, operations research computers, etc., and it is the library's responsibility to see that firstly information on these courses is made available to those interested; and secondly that recommended textbooks and background documents are available in the library for those attending the courses. The library should also have reading space for apprentices and other younger members of the company who have been given time for private study. The author has done industrial libraries a service by drawing attention to this aspect of their work.

A basic point which has been brought out is the need to streamline the administrative functions so that the maximum time may be given to the information service—"the proliferation of unnecessary records is one of the simplest ways of wasting staff time that can be found."

The book is nearly free from typographical errors, only the missing letter on page 117 catches the eye. Mr. Foskett's style makes for easy reading, and the chapters follow one another in a convenient order. The further readings given at the end of each chapter could have been better arranged and references should have been provided for quotations given in the text.

D. MASON.

### **Dictator Colehan**

We liked and appreciated your review of our new book *Be A Librarian*, in the September issue, but were pained to see that a new dictator has risen in the shape of Mr. Philip Colehan—a man obviously determined to end the endless controversy of up or down the spine. Being of the down persuasion, and in good company with the British Standards Institution, we shall continue thus, preferring not to say we are right or wrong.

As to the mention of the A.A.L.: surely it is impossible for something to be "scarcely mentioned"? Either it is mentioned or not. In fact, the A.A.L. is mentioned twice and its objects briefly summarised on page 30.

Finally, Mr. Colehan complains of "a ridiculous photograph of what purports to be a story hour in a junior library." Since the photograph was supplied by the author, who is Borough Librarian of Bromley, and represents a scene in the children's library at Bromley, the word "purports" seems to cast an unnecessary slur. We also disagree that the photograph is ridiculous.

HUMPHREY WILSON, *Director, Crosby Lockwood and Son, Ltd.*

### **Co-operation**

In fairness to Mr. Currie, I must qualify the criticisms made by Mr. Colehan in his review of *Be A Librarian*.

On the matter of the Production Exhibition stands in 1956 the facts of the matter are these. When the Library Association agreed to sponsor a stand at the exhibition, we immediately approached Aslib, who had by that time already booked space. The exhibition was divided into a number of areas; the Aslib stand was sited in the area designated Research and the Library Association therefore selected an excellent site in the area designated Education. From this point the two stands were developed in collaboration and the give-away leaflet was produced as a co-operative venture and was available on both stands. In this way, very satisfactory co-operation was in fact achieved in spite of the fact that there were, as Mr. Colehan says, two independent stands.

D. J. FOSKETT, *University of London Institute of Education.*

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